



Senator **Mike Carrell**

28th Legislative District

2007 Mid-Session Newsletter

March 2007

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It's a new year and we're two months into the 2007 Legislative session. Several thousand bills will be considered this year, and I wanted to draw your attention to several issues that will help you better understand how I represent you. I hope you will find this session update informative.

The biggest issue is always about money. Who should we tax? How much should we tax? Should we relieve some taxes? How should we allocate the state's two billion dollar surplus? As your senator, I take these questions very seriously. Washington State can't afford to be a high tax, business unfriendly state if good paying jobs are going to be available for our families. I'll talk more about this issue in following pages.

In my last several newsletters, I told you about my efforts to enact prison and supervision reform. I co-chaired the Joint Legislative Task Force on Offender Programs, Sentencing and Supervision during the interim. Senator Debbie Regala (D-Tacoma) and I have been working with many others to craft Senate Bill 5070. All of this work has come together into my bill which will save \$1 billion and keep you safer.

Please continue reading to learn more about what we are working on here in Olympia, and as always, I am privileged to serve you and I welcome your ideas and concerns.

Warmest regards,

Mike



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Committees:

- Health & Long-Term Care
- Human Services & Corrections
- Judiciary
- Ways & Means

Legislative information on the Internet:

www.leg.wa.gov/legislature/

State government on the Internet:
www.access.wa.gov

Town Hall Meetings March 15 & 17
(See details on the back page)

Cutting crime, saving victims and building lives

As you know, I've been working for nearly three years to bring about changes to the way felons are supervised when they're released from prison. Governor Gregoire has said she sees a problem with our prison system and the way felons are supervised once they're let out. **Community correction and police agree that officers don't have enough control over ex-felons.**



It's obvious that when somebody seriously and repeatedly violates the conditions of their release and nothing is done, then we have a problem. My bill requires ex-felons to be returned to prison when they repeatedly violate their conditional release.

Last year, the governor signed SB 6308 which created the Joint Legislative Task Force on Offender Programs, Sentencing and Supervision, which I co-chaired. We worked with the Department of Corrections to develop the most comprehensive reworking of DOC programs since the agency's creation. That vision drives my Senate Bill 5070, which is a comprehensive, bipartisan overhaul of how the state incarcerates, treats, releases and supervises its felons.

SB 5070 has passed the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee and awaits senate floor action. Numerous people helped in creating this legislation, including the head of the DOC, former offenders, families of people who are currently incarcerated, those who work with former offenders, victims rights groups, the courts, law enforcement officers including Lakewood Police Chief Larry Saunders, and the End of Sentencing Review Commission.

There are many new ideas in the bill. One is the creation of Community Transition Coordination Networks that bring local police, courts and

community groups closer together to work with the DOC.

Secondly, the DOC will develop an individual reentry plan for each offender to follow while incarcerated and during their transition back into the community. These plans are based on a comprehensive assessment of each offender's risks and needs.

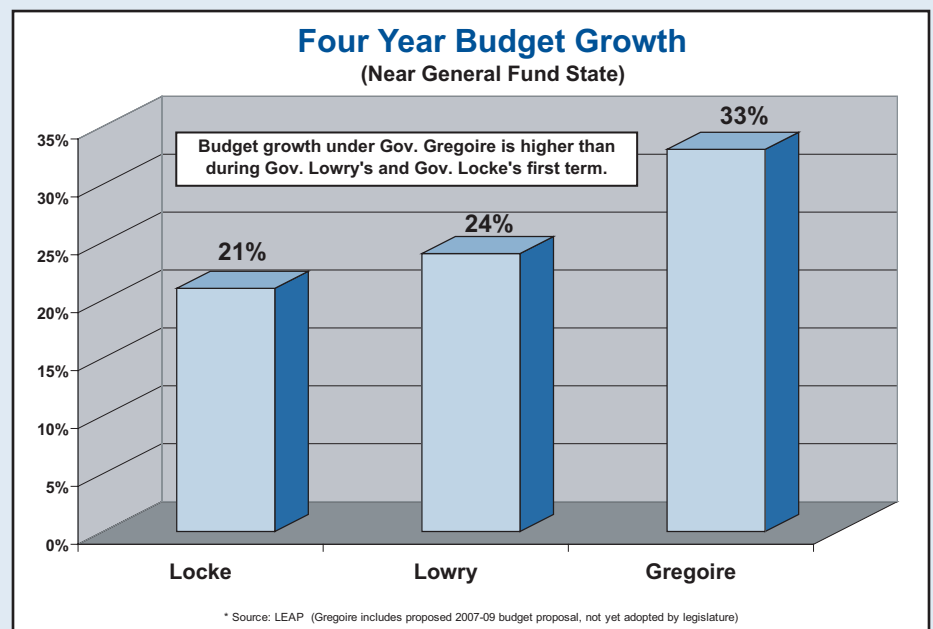
97% of all felons will be released into the community, most sooner rather than later. SB 5070 will change the system by reducing the number of new crime victims. **Further, we expect to save state taxpayers \$1 billion dollars and state and local governments as much as 15% to 20% of their total operational costs. We are using evidence-based programs that we know work.**

While our current prison population is nearly 18,000, within five years it is projected to grow 25% unless we do something to reduce the number of offenders who return to prison for new crimes. We will be building more prisons unless we do something about the recidivism rate. My bill will hold prison population near current levels by stopping the revolving door of criminals re-offending. Instead of building prisons, we'll be building lives.

Overspending with the proposed budget

Every two years, the governor has to propose a budget for the state. While Governor Locke's spending increased 21% over four years, and Governor Lowry's spending increased 24% over four years, Governor Gregoire is on pace to increase spending by 33% over four years.

Our state revenue is expected to grow by nearly \$32.1 billion between 2007 and 2009. The new policies that our governor is proposing will increase state spending to \$33.4 billion. Her budget will spend \$5.7 million MORE every day, outspending new revenues by \$1.3 billion. That, unfortunately, may translate to new taxes on citizens.



Protecting you from improper government actions



Photo of Mike with Ken Miller family

Eminent domain, or the right of the government to take land belonging to a private citizen to serve the public need, is an issue that has touched our community. One

of your neighbors, Ken Miller, had his property seized by Sound Transit after a notice was posted on their Web site. Miller didn't learn about Sound Transit's intentions until after the agency voted to take his land. Ken appealed the decision to Sound Transit's board of directors and lost. The state Supreme Court upheld the board's actions in a 5-4 decision, saying a Web site posting is just as good as the established process, which is to notify a person by letter or notice posted on the property.

Sound Transit (the executive branch) and the judicial branch of our government failed Ken Miller. Now it's up to the legislature to right this wrong.

That's why I prime sponsored Senate Bill 5444, which requires state agencies, local governments and utilities to send certified letters to a property owner and publish a notice in the newspaper before seizing private land. My bill was one of the very first that passed the senate 48-0. It is now in the House Judiciary Committee.

The overwhelming approval of my bill shows that the legislature is addressing problems with eminent domain notification in our state. With its passage, I'm hopeful that the people of Washington will no longer have to worry about the government taking their land without properly notifying them.

Patriot's Landing in DuPont - Keeping Couples Together

Our district is home to several skilled nursing and long-term health care facilities. Sometimes, when married couples age, they are forced to separate from their spouses in order to receive proper individualized treatment. I've proposed a bill that would allow married couples to remain at the same facility even

though they may now require skilled nursing care. Senate Bill 5144 was heard by the Senate Health and Long-Term Care Committee, and a busload of friends from Patriot's Landing in DuPont came to Olympia to testify in favor of this bill. I want to thank them for taking the time to participate in your state government.

Seniors deserve just as much attention and consideration as anyone else, and I am trying to ensure that those who need skilled nursing care are given the proper respect that they deserve.

Protecting Foster Families

If someone accuses a foster parent of abuse, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) classifies that claim as *Founded*, *Unfounded* or *Inconclusive*. That classification remains on the record of foster parents for years, and can leave foster parents with a smudge on their record.

Earlier this session, the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee heard testimony on my bill, SB 5321. It would protect families that are wrongfully accused of child abuse by requiring DSHS to make reasonable efforts to investigate the validity of the claim and to resolve the case. DSHS would

be limited to just two classifications, *Founded* and *Unfounded*.

This would eliminate any ambiguity about a claim of child abuse. Foster families deserve the same protections people get in the courts. Our legal system has two classifications, *guilty* or *not guilty*. DSHS should have to do the same.

Another problem this bill corrects is the current practice of giving all claims of abuse, whether *Founded*, *Unfounded* or *Inconclusive*, to agencies who hire foster parents. My bill allows only *Founded* charges to be available to agencies to use in their hiring practices.

Honoring Chris Navarre

Chris is one of our neighbors who lives at Patriot's Landing in DuPont with his wife, Bernice. During WWII, Chris served as a tank gunner with the 761st Black Panther Tank Battalion, and spearheaded several attacks that allowed General Patton's 4th Armored Division to drive into Germany. He fought elements from 14 different German divisions in the drive across the Rhine River.

Late last year, the President of France signed a decree naming Chris a ***Chevalier of the Legion of Honor*** for his efforts during WWII. Chris will be honored by the Washington State Senate on April 10 for his leadership, courage, valor, and selfless service, and I'm happy that his services to the USA and to France are finally being recognized.

Save This



Town Hall Meetings

March 15th, 7 PM

University Place City Hall
Room 3715
Bridgeport Way West
University Place, WA

March 17th, 10 AM

Lakewood City Hall
Chambers Rooms
6000 Main Street SW
Lakewood, WA

March 17th, 1:30 PM

Patriots Landing
Evergreen Room
1600 Marshall Circle 205
DuPont, WA

I'll be holding a series of town hall meetings in the coming days to talk with you about issues that we are facing. I'd like to invite you all to attend one of these meetings to let me know what you think. Regardless, I would ask that you fill out the survey below and bring it to the meeting or mail it in. Feel free to continue your thoughts on another sheet of paper. I'm looking forward to listening to you.

SURVEY

1. How do you think our educational system is doing? However you feel, what do you think is the key to improving the system? Do you think simply putting more money in it, as we've been doing for years, will improve the system?

2. With nearly 50% of Washington's 10th graders who took the math WASL last spring failing, how would you suggest the legislature address this alarming problem? Some suggestions are to delay the math requirement and the science requirement by several years, to spend even more money on the state's math programs over the next two years, to find dedicated sources of education funding, such as in the Senate "Rainy Day" proposal, and to partner with Microsoft in developing a best-practices approach.

3. How would you suggest the state limit the amount of property tax collected? Current suggestions are to limit property tax growth to 1% per year (as originally passed in 2001 with I-747), limit it to 2% per year (as originally passed in 2000), return it to the 6% per year it was before both amendments, or tie property tax increases with the annual rate of inflation (as originally passed in 1997 with Referendum 47).

4. Since 97% of all felons get out of prison, what can the state do to make that more acceptable to you?

5. The Senate is considering changing the three strikes law to remove second degree assault and robbery from the list of applicable crimes. Second degree assault means to assault someone with a deadly weapon or to recklessly cause substantial bodily harm. How do you feel about this proposal?

6. The Senate is also considering proposals to repeal the state's death penalty. What do you think of this idea?

7. What do you believe should be done with the state's budget surplus of nearly \$2 billion?

8. I've been working on issues like prison reform and eminent domain during this session. What issues would you like me to pursue during the rest of the Legislative session? What other issues are important to you?

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